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To:	Microsoft ATR
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Quite frankly the "deal" that was cut simply will not take care of the problem. What's thousands, millions, or billions of dollars in software when they're the publishers of said software? The answer is the cost of the media, training, and the hardware. Does the government actually believe that Microsoft will provide the training and the hardware? The media is easy, simply copy some CDs, throw them in boxes and ship. Hardware, a little more difficult, but still an obtainable goal. The training? Forget it. Not one school will have any trainers knocking on their door. Any money given to the schools for training will be spent in other much needed areas I'm sure.

Did the government think that Microsoft would find a hardware manufacturer that wouldn't give them an excellent break of the cost of the hardware? I don't know of a manufacturer that wouldn't be willing to provide that equipment for pennies and their first born. My niece's school district uses Gateway computers. If you ask her what kind of computer she wants for home, her answer (surprise, surprise) is Gateway. What a wonderful marketing opportunity for the hardware manufacturer. If I made computers I would love to be the recipient of that contract.

Likewise for Microsoft, who stands to lose nothing and gain everything from this "deal." By "donating" the software to the schools they're ensuring that the next generation of computer users will (again surprise, surprise) choose Microsoft products when asked. They're insuring their product line into the next generation.

At the beginning of my IT career I was a Microsoft supporter. As time has passed, however I've become more and more reluctant to choose Microsoft products. If you choose one product, you're forced into using at least three others that are required to make the first product function correctly. With their recent release of Windows XP and their Passport service it is clearly evident that they have no intention of changing their predatory ways. Back in the 80's everyone had a chance, little guys and big companies alike. With today's tech landscape only the big companies can make it. The largest of the big companies is easy to identify -- Microsoft.

The only solution is for a break up -- un-palpable as it may be for the economy and for the growing number of Microsoft only IT shops around the world.

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